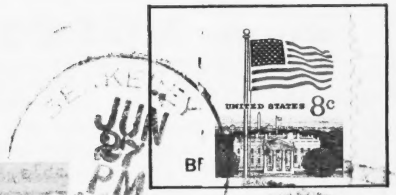
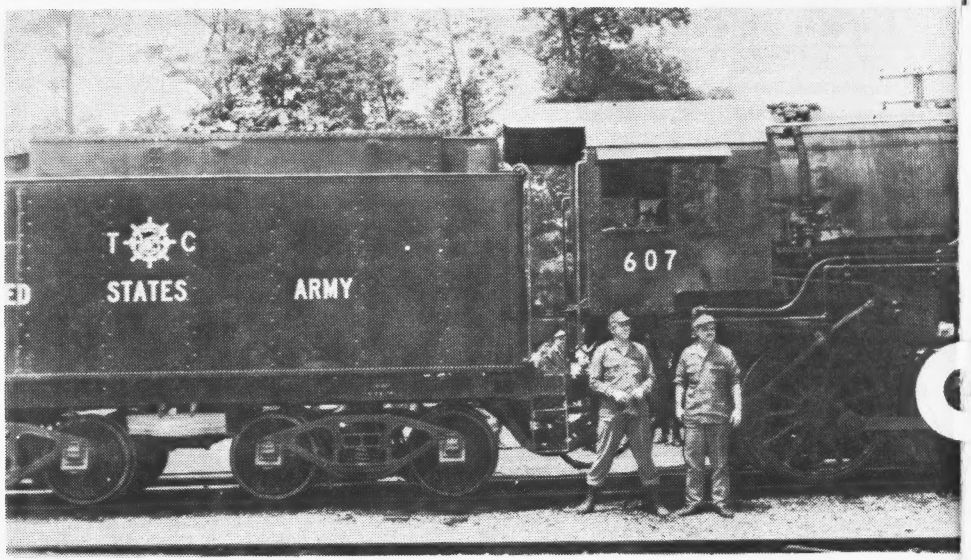
FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

To:



First Class



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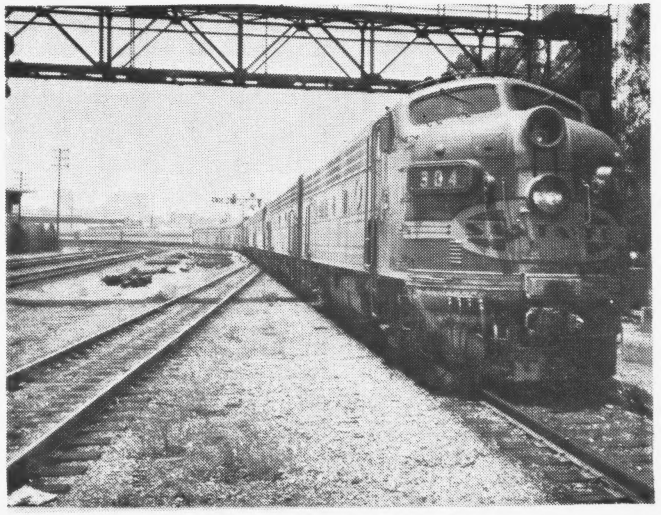
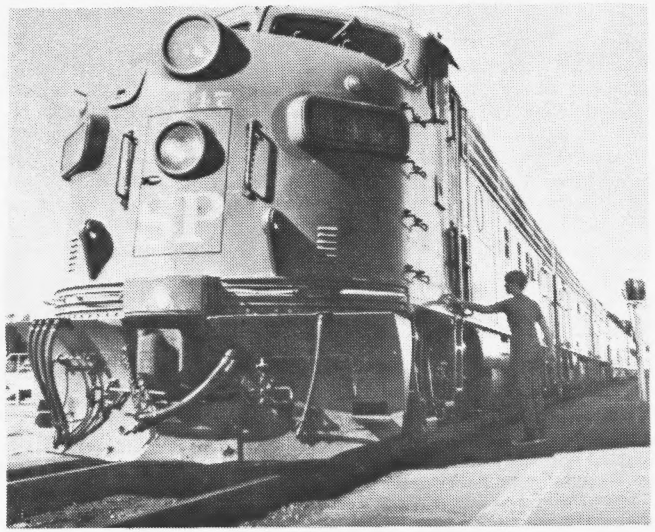
#38



The New Trains



ON THE COVER:

(Front) Top: The second eastbound CHIEF, Amtrak train 20, pulls out of Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal on June 14, behind Santa Fe engine 304. Photo by Paul Rayton. Bottom: The first eastbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, Amtrak train 6, loads at Oakland on June 11. A young railfan examines the lead SP engine 6447. Photo by Sari Sudo.
(Rear) Top: RTN staff members (left to right) Doug Ellis and Steve Farrar pose for photographer H. Reid on one of the last steam runs of the 714th Army Transportation Battalion, the last operating railway battalion. The date was May 31, and Ellis and Farrar were serving as Fireman and Conductor, respectively. Bottom: Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey circus train under C&O power moves thru Lee Hall, Virginia, on May 31, eastbound from Washington to Newport News, with 30 cars. Photo by Andrew Roebuck.

"You hoid me right, buddy — the two-toity METROLINER left at two-twenty-eight."

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 12 (Whole No. 38), June 19, 1972.
Published twice monthly, on the first and third Mondays, by Message Media.
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STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor at Large; Richard Tower, Research Editor; Steve Farrar, East Coast Editor; Doug Ellis, East Coast Photographer.
Projected mailing date for this issue: June 26.

TICKETS AND TIMETABLES: THE PRENNIAL PROBLEMS ANOTHER SUMMER OF SNAFUS BEGINS

Summer travel is now well underway, and the most prominent result newswise has been a deluge of reports concerning that critical interface between traveler and vehicle, the information and ticketing system. If you don't know where and when the trains run and have difficulties getting tickets, you don't ride the train. The following summarizes reports that have crossed our desk since the last issue went to press:

* Joe Vranich, Executive Director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, went to Washington DC Union Station June 12 to pick up a copy of Amtrak's June 11 national timetable. The agent told him the new schedules "aren't in yet." Vranich insisted that Amtrak had told him the timetables had been delivered, so the agent went into a discussion with two other employees. He returned and announced "The timetables have been delivered but are in storage in the baggage room. They'll get around to opening the boxes in a day or two. Can you come back?"

Exasperated, Vranich fired off a letter to Amtrak President Roger Lewis in which he complained "Why should I 'come back' at all? Ever? I've received such bad treatment on your railroad lately that I'm toying with the idea of boycotting it, even with a heavy travel schedule ahead of me. Mr. Lewis, I keep trying to ride your trains. Unfortunately, instead of coming away with tickets, information and timetables, I've been coming away with an ulcer. I've never been treated like this aboard any airline, bus line or ferryboat."

* Prominent railfan-reporter Harre Demoro wrote in a large-headlined Oakland Tribune article June 20 that Amtrak doesn't answer the telephone number listed for it in Oakland. He said Tribune personnel made a dozen calls the preceding week at various hours, but each time there was either no answer or a busy signal. He reported that one passenger stood in line 35 minutes on June 17 at the San Francisco ticket office only to be told there was no bedroom space on the COAST STARLIGHT for June 30.

* Tom Coval, Eastern Pennsylvania Membership Chairman of NARP, wrote Amtrak President Roger Lewis June 19 about similar problems in Philadelphia. In that important Northeast Corridor city, it is "not unusual" for Amtrak's reservations phone to ring 30 or more times before it is answered. Coval said it lacks an electronic system for automatic storing of calls along with a recorded message, altho all airlines in that city use such a device. He complained that "Philadelphia has experienced quite obviously a tremendous increase in train patronage...Yet, there has been no visible increase in either the number of ticket agents... information phone operators... or computerized METROLINER reservation ticket machines." He said "The employees...are obviously over-worked and this leads to an obvious morale problem, frazzled nerves, tending to inspire unfortunate remarks..." He said "in speaking with a number of travel agents who have recently paid a fee for the right to make Amtrak reservations, I find them thoroughly disgusted with their inability to get through to complete their reservation transaction with an agent at 30th St." He observed that the system has been "thrown into a state of chaos." He concluded that "Skimping on personnel expenditures for Philadelphia is equivalent to cutting one's jugular vein. If Amtrak is not willing to commit additional funds to Philadelphia, where a profit is already being made, then one must question whether Amtrak is serious at all about their stated objective of creating an effective, efficient and on-going alternative means of transportation by rail."

* Information and reservations employees at Washington DC Union Station have expressed exasperation about the antiquated system under which Amtrak still functions. They report that the Chicago reservation bureau is "as slow and undependable as anything could be." One employee observed that "here we have all these people who want to spend their money to travel by train, and we can't take it because of this reservation snafu."

* RTN reader Robert Lampert of Normandy, Missouri reports that the "reservation-ticket counter in Chicago is SLOW!!! I was supposed to pick up my tickets for my August trip in "Will Call." I was told a week and a half ago I could pick them up...on that day. I waited in line (two ahead of me) for 25 minutes only to find they knew nothing of my tickets.... Two people ahead of me had same experience..."

* RTN reader Christopher Latimer of Washington DC reports:"last winter, having arrived at (New York's Penn Station) considerably earlier than I had expected, I tried to exchange my ticket for an earlier train--a transaction which would have required perhaps five minutes at an airline counter. The Amtrak employees took no less than 1 hour and 40 minutes, shunting me from one line to another, closing windows on three different occasions just as I reached them after waiting in line, etc. I just couldn't believe it. Nor was I the only sufferer. The whole crowd was getting edgy and there were angry exchanges between agents and would-be passengers throughout... Something really should be done, as you say, about Penn Station in New York."

* RTN checked out the Oakland Tribune's claims about no response from the Oakland Amtrak telephone. We phoned on various occasions this month, and a couple times the phone rang perhaps fifty times before we gave up. Other times there were busy signals, and still others there was an answer from a very polite employee.

* Message Media has been asked to cancel planned advertisements in Rail Travel Newsletter from one of the oldest and largest Bay Area travel agents because it is finding that making reservations on trains is too time-consuming and exasperating. It is unable to obtain current timetables, and Amtrak offices phoned have no information or do not answer telephones. On at least one occasion an Amtrak information person claimed that an existing Amtrak train did not exist.

In sum, our observations so far this summer indicate that Amtrak trains are heavily patronized in spite of the problems referred to above. But how many passengers will be turned away or turned off by their trips, and how much potential revenue will be lost to Amtrak is difficult to determine.

OMB MAY BOMB OUT AMTRAK

With Amtrak's funding bill finally passed by both houses of Congress, in the compromise version, President Nixon signed the bill June 23. The bill allows Amtrak $325 million spread out this way: $225 in grants and a raise in two stages to a $100-million loan guarantee. It also gives $2 million per year for services to Canada and Mexico, and cuts President Roger Lewis's salary from $125,000 to $60,000 per year. The bill requires Amtrak to carry mail to increase revenue, to give monthly reports on revenue, expenses and on-time performance, and urges Amtrak to control directly as much of its service as possible. It requires federal auditing of railroads to keep a check on Amtrak's finances.

According to the NY Times, it will now be necessary to persuade the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to release the authorized funds to Amtrak, since the Administration had wanted to limit Amtrak's money to $170 million. OMB, as an arm of the Administration,is known to be cool to Amtrak, and originally cut out the Western routes later restored to the Amtrak system.

Caspar Weinberger, present head of OMB, is former State Finance Director under Gov. Reagan of California. At one time he wrote a column for a San Francisco newspaper, and at the time that SP was attempting to discontinue the overnight S.F.-L.A. LARK train, he wrote that public opposition to the discontinuance was "idiotic." He felt that "the great majority of people simply no longer want to ride overnight trains in sufficient numbers to keep those trains profitable." This man will now have to be convinced that passenger trains deserve Federal support for proper restoration.

DON'T MISS the next important issue of RTN, in which Paul Rayton gives his first report on riding Amtrak. After waiting a year for Amtrak to settle in, Paul gives us a firsthand report on a round-the-country tour, with rare photographs. Coming in the July 3 issue.

East Coast Report

by Steve Farrar

Southern Railway engine painted for use on the SOUTHERN CRESCENT, described in an earlier column. Photo made at Washington by Paul Rayton.

FIRST northbound CAROLINA COAST at Richmond, VA, June 12: 2 Amtrak engines, Santa Fe baggage, UP coach, SP coach, Amtrak (ex-SP) coach, SP coach (all leg-rest), SCL diner, SCL sleeper. The timetable calls for a grill car and a lounge. Maybe the diner had some lounge seating.

AMTRAK RAN a test train from New York to Montreal via Springfield June 15, returning the next day via Albany. Dave Watts (VP-Planning) and F.S. King (VP-Operations) were aboard. Purpose was to check tracks and assess interest of people along the lines to determine which route to use to Canada.

The logical choice is the New England route, for several reasons: (1) It would serve 5.75 million people at intermediate points, instead of 237 thousand. (2) It would use Penn Station, New York, which would permit thru service to Washington, or better yet, to Florida; whereas the Albany route would dead-end at Grand Central Terminal. (3) It would be over friendly rails: Canadian National, its subsidiary Central Vermont, and John W. Barriger's Boston & Maine, instead of the N&W-controlled Delaware & Hudson, which could hardly be called pro-passenger. (4) Montreal terminal would be at CN's modern Central Station, providing connections with the greatest number of intercity and commuter trains. The D&H route terminates at CP's old and empty Windsor Station. It is easy to imagine thru service between Montreal and Miami using the SILVER STAR and an overnight schedule between New York and Montreal, consolidated with present trains between Springfield and New York. A SILVER STAR run four hours later out of Miami could be consolidated with the CONNECTICUT YANKEE at Washington.

DOES AMTRAK'S right hand know what the left is doing? The OFFICIAL GUIDE shows a revived 8am train from New York to Washington, as well as a 7:05am BAY STATE and a 2:05pm MINUTEMAN out of Washington. But PC's timetable does not show the MINUTEMAN. And Amtrak's timetable doesn't show any of them. We don't know what's going on, and we're sure the ticket agents don't either.

MISCELLANY: Southern Railway's fare increase went into effect June 11... The Valley Railroad, which operates steam excursions between Essex and

Deep River, CT, hopes to extend its service to Old Saybrook to connect with Amtrak trains... SR President Claytor recently stated that the SOUTHERN CRESCENT costs $9.94 per train mile to operate, minimum, but that in the last quarter of 1971 Washington-Atlanta revenues were $5.44 per train mile; and Atlanta-New Orleans was only $1.68. The passenger-only ASHEVILLE SPECIAL took in only 24¢ per train mile. No word on the earnings of the piggy-back/passenger runs, which are probably profitable (this item from the SOUTHERN RAILFAN)

(Ed. Note: Steve's Railway Battalion was, at last word, shutting down June 22. In response to requests, Steve's mailing address is Box 3153, Lee Hall, VA 23603.)

AUTO-TRAIN FACT SHEET

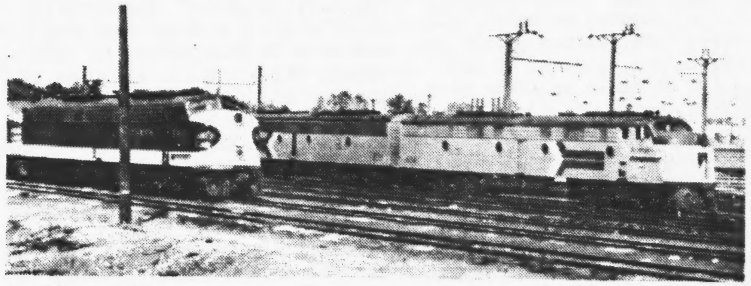
South - Read down Schedule	Actual May 12-13		North - Read up Schedule	Actual May 13-14
8:00p	7:45p	Lv Lorton	Ar 11:30a	11:58a
none	9:15p	Ar Richmond	Lv none	10:20a
9:55p	9:55p	Lv Richmond	Ar 9:35a	10:05a
10:29p	10:30p	By Petersburg	By 8:46a	9:27a
none	12:12a	Ar Rocky Mount	Lv 7:14a	8:01a
11:59p	12:20a	Lv Rocky Mount	Ar none	(asleep)
1:29a	(asleep)	By Fayetteville	By 5:39a	(asleep)
2:55a	(asleep)	Ar Florence	Lv 4:20a	(asleep)
6:20a	(asleep)	Lv Savannah	Ar 12:50a	(asleep)
Ar &	Ar 9:15a		Ar & Lv	Lv 10:30p
Lv 8:35a	Lv 9:18a	Jacksonville	10:30p	Ar 10:25p
9:09a	No record	By Grn. Cove Spgs	By 9:41p	9:47p
9:35a	No record	By Palatka	By 9:15p	9:22p
10:25a	No record	By DeLand	By 8:24p	8:29p
11:30a	12:25p	Ar Sanford	Lv 8:00p	7:53p

Runs Extra Lorton-Richmond via RF&P
No. 1 Richmond to Lorton via SCL—cannot leave early.
No. 2 Lorton to Richmond—permitted to leave Sanford early, but must wait for time 5 miles out if running early at that point.

Speed Limits—Lorton-Richmond: 70mph
Richmond-Sanford: 79mph

Operating Stops—Richmond: crew change
Rocky Mount: engine crew change, water psgr cars
Florence: crew change, water steam gen. car, fuel loco
Savannah: crew change
Jacksonville: crew change

The above information was collected by Steve Farrar on his recent AUTO-TRAIN trip reported in the last issue.



Southern Railway and Amtrak engines, both in new paint, sit in the Washington DC yards. Photo by Paul Rayton.

REPORT ON THE RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR

The tri-weekly, non-Amtrak RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR has been given an "A" rating by one of our most discerning train-riding friends, Rev. Don MacInnes. He reports, after a recent Salt Lake-Denver ride, that the train has been completely refurbished—new paint, new upholstery, new carpets, even a new scenic painting in the observation bar under the dome.

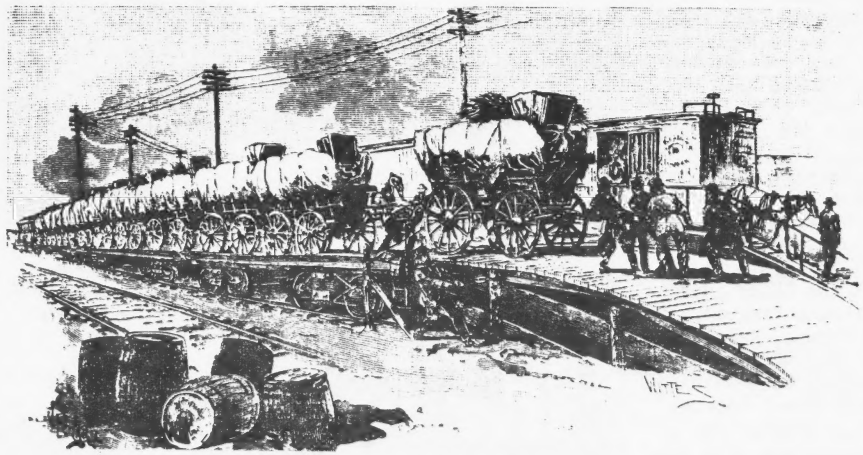
The old CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR menu and service standards are still being followed faithfully, which means the dining is superb. Steak, for instance, is available for all three meals, and prices are reasonable. The train is staffed in the traditional manner by an exceptionally polite crew. The consist includes ex-PROSPECTOR baggage-dorm-chair #1230, dome coach "Silver Broncho," diner "Silver Banquet," and dome tail car "Silver Sky," with a flattop coach added for overflow business.

We recommend riding this train thru the spectacular Rocky Mountain scenery while you still can.

MORE TICKET DELAYS

RTN staffer Rich Tower reports it took him and a friend a full hour to pick up tickets in Oakland this month. Their order had been phoned to the S.F. reservation center the day before: 2 reserved seats to Ogden with the tickets to read Oakland-Denver via SP and Rio Grande. When the time came to pick them up, the tickets had not been prepared nor had the rate been figured. Nearly a half-hour was consumed while the clerk waited for an open phone line, then consulted with the tariff man in S.F. over charges. Why didn't the S.F. office place the rate on the ticket order before sending it to Oakland, and why didn't Oakland, the major Amtrak Bay Area terminal, have the necessary tariffs to obtain the rate themselves, if need be?

Some 15 minutes were taken for the clerk to make out two 5-coupon tickets (this for an Oakland-Denver trip over 2 railroads!), then another 20 minutes to verify MasterCharge and American Express cards (why does it take only a few seconds everywhere else?). The clerk was polite and apologetic, but that isn't good enough. It is intolerable to wait that long to pick up tickets requested in advance, and there is no reason why a customer should put up with it. Amtrak has now been around for over a year, and yet inadequate supervision and impossible procedures still hamper the ticketing process. Those ticket window posters extolling the politeness of Amtrak employees are of little consolation. How about an apology for outrageous delays instead?



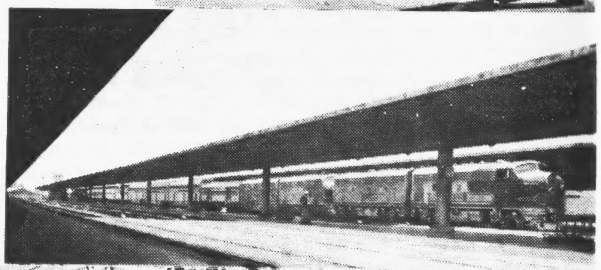
"That's right — AUTO-TRAIN's policy is first on, first off."

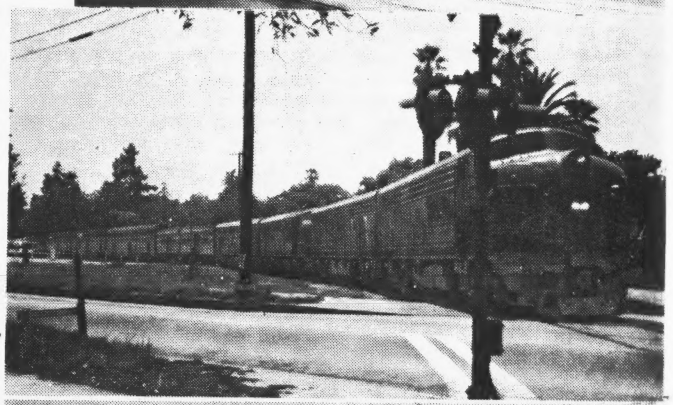
The New Trains

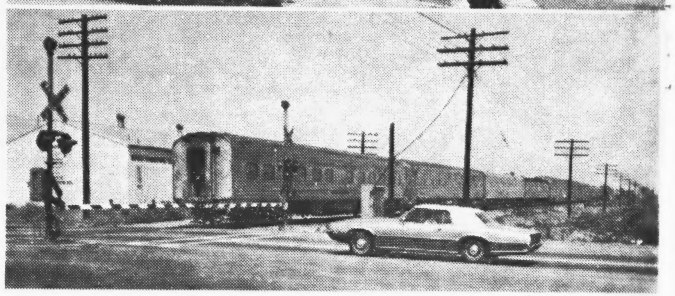
"The next outbound train is the CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO" intoned the P.A. system at Oakland June 11. A train was pulling up to the station. Some railfans might have mistaken it for a group of junk cars deadheading to the scrap yard. But both PA and railfans were wrong. The train was the 1st eastbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, a Zephyr in name only, with nary an Amtrak logo to cover up the decadence of the equipment. The station people had no timetables and hadn't been told of the name change. Still, happy travelers were boarding (top photo by Sari Sudo). Consist: 3 SP "F" units, SP baggage dorm, UP coach, BN coach, SP flattop lounge 2982, SP diner 10204, UP Placid Haven slpr, SP 9020 slpr—the last car the most attractive of the lot.

Two days later the 1st eastbd CHIEF was leaving Los Angeles (2nd photo). Led by Santa Fe engine 311, it's seen in the 3rd photo pulling out of Pasadena. Three hi-level coaches are in the consist, and on the end a slumbercoach and sleeper. The bottom photo (all by Paul Rayton) might be titled "Autos wait-this train is in a hurry." In it the CHIEF is racing thru a crossing near Pomona, Calif.

Information on the 1st CAROLINA COAST is given in East Coast Report. The 1st southbd run of the train was sold out.







Rails in Britain 1972

by George Drury

Two Weeks, Two Cents a Mile

"Rail Strike in Britain" was the headline I read in the newspaper as the plane left Chicago. I thought of the two-week BritRailPass in my pocket and sighed. The article said there'd be no trains for the weekend, and it would be Monday afternoon before service would be anywhere near normal. The trip from Heathrow to my friend's house involved bus (BR's Rail-Air Link service), train, and taxi; I decided there was nothing I could do then and there, so I sat back and waited for dinner. It came long after everyone had a chance at drinks, newspapers, and earphones for the movie and the music. After dinner came a dreadful movie about two children and a gruff sea captain, fifteen minutes of sleepy-time, sunrise, and coffee and a roll. Landing at Heathrow took some circling, and de-planing was delayed half an hour while the airline hunted for a stairway that would fit the 747. I cleared customs and immigration quickly and headed for the British Rail desk in the concourse to see if (1) the strike had been settled, (2) the buses were running, and (3) how I could get to Dorchester-on-Thames. There was no problem, as it turned out. My friend was waiting there, with car.

The only activity scheduled for the day, out of deference to jet lag, was the Open Day of the Great Western Society at Didcot. On display were numerous steam engines, including several in operation. My first train ride in England, because of the strike, therefore, was on the footplate (in the cab) of a 4-6-0, Pendennis Castle.

As I started my two-week tour of British Rail, I had only a general idea where and when I'd be going. I had trusted all arrangements to my friend, Jim Calvert. He had written early in the season to suggest we ride this, that, and the other, and I decided he knew more about it than I did. My confidence, it turned out, was well placed.

The tour began Monday morning. We arrived at Didcot station with plenty of time to make the 8:21 up to London, Paddington Station. (Trains in Britain are known by their departure times or, in a few cases, train names, rather than by train number.) We checked the departure board and found that our train would be on Platform 4. As we reached the top of the stairs the loudspeaker announced, "British Rail regret that the 8:21 to Paddington has been cancelled. Passengers to London should take the 8:45 on Platform 2." We turned around, went back down the stairs, and up to Platform 2. While we waited two fast trains rolled through at 90 mph, with only a singing noise from the rails to announce them, and that only five seconds in advance of their passage. None of the waiting passengers seemed the least concerned. British Rail then regretted to announce that the 8:45 was delayed 6 minutes and apologized for the delay. The train rolled in, and we scanned the consist for the first-class coaches, identified by a yellow stripe above the windows. Boarding is a do-it-youself process: turn the door handle, open the door, step up one short step from the platform, and close the door behind you. We found seats in a first-class compartment and settled back for the 60 minute, 53 mile trip to Paddington. There was a bit of delay entering Paddington, waiting for down (outbound) trains to clear, but the train soon threaded its way through the network of double-slip switches to its appointed platform. Getting off the train is also a do-it-yourself process: lower the window in the door, reach out and turn the door handle, and out you go.

From Paddington we took the Underground to Euston, a fast ride in clean, comfortable cars - not a graffito nor a slashed seat in sight. The Underground uses two rails for current collection: one outside, in the usual place, and the other between the running rails, like Lionel.

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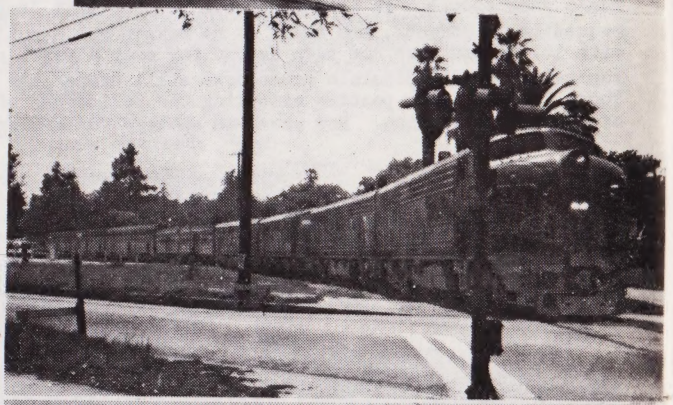

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The tour began Monday morning. We arrived at Didcot station with plenty of time to make the 8:21 up to London, Paddington Station. (Trains in Britain are known by their departure times or, in a few cases, train names, rather than by train number.) We checked the departure board and found that our train would be on Platform 4. As we reached the top of the stairs the loudspeaker announced, "British Rail regret that the 8:21 to Paddington has been cancelled. Passengers to London should take the 8:45 on Platform 2." We turned around, went back down the stairs, and up to Platform 2. While we waited two fast trains rolled through at 90 mph, with only a singing noise from the rails to announce them, and that only five seconds in advance of their passage. None of the waiting passengers seemed the least concerned. British Rail then regretted to announce that the 8:45 was delayed 6 minutes and apologized for the delay. The train rolled in, and we scanned the consist for the first-class coaches, identified by a yellow stripe above the windows. Boarding is a do-it-youself process: turn the door handle, open the door, step up one short step from the platform, and close the door behind you. We found seats in a first-class compartment and settled back for the 60 minute, 53 mile trip to Paddington. There was a bit of delay entering Paddington, waiting for down (outbound) trains to clear, but the train soon threaded its way through the network of double-slip switches to its appointed platform. Getting off the train is also a do-it-yourself process: lower the window in the door, reach out and turn the door handle, and out you go.

From Paddington we took the Underground to Euston, a fast ride in clean, comfortable cars - not a graffito nor a slashed seat in sight. The Underground uses two rails for current collection: one outside, in the usual place, and the other between the running rails, like Lionel.

Euston is a brand new station: a rectangular concrete box. I've seen pictures of the old Euston Station, a building about which there was much talk of preservation because to its architectural distinction. Ah, well. Because of the delay getting to Paddington we missed the Royal Scot, the 10:00 to Glasgow. Missing a train in England, though, isn't the catastrophe it is in the western U.S. We boarded the 11:00 to Liverpool, taking seats in the restaurant car, since we were going only to Crewe, about two hours. The train left Euston on schedule, and shortly we were rolling at 100 mph under 25,000 volt catenary.

Lunch came soon: the menu listed three choices: Roast Best End of Lamb, Chicken Chasseur, and Cold Meats and Salads. Service in the restaurant cars is quite different from U.S. practice. After everyone is seated, a steward (waiter) asks each person if he'd like soup. Those who say "yes" get a soup plate. Behind him is a second steward with a large tureen of soup, and following him is another steward with various kinds of fruit juice. The stewards clear away the dishes of the first course and pass out dinner plates, warmed or chilled, as appropriate. They go back to the kitchen and return with large platters of the meat courses, very attractively arranged, and serving dishes of vegetables - two kinds of potatoes and two green vegetables, the former quite flavorful and the latter fresh and not overcooked. Even the brussels sprouts were good. Dessert is served similarly, either a sweet or large tray of cheeses, crackers, and, oddly but pleasantly, a salad vegetable such as celery or lettuce. After that is coffee, an excellent French roast type. However, you must be quick to say "black," because milk is customary in it. However, it's real milk. The charge for this meal is one pound and ten pence, about $3. The restaurant cars are better than most of the restaurants I ate in; the food is on a par with Union Pacific service of a year or so ago here.

The train also carried a buffet car, which served coffee, tea, beer, and pre-packaged sandwiches. It did a brisk business, too.

We arrived Crewe at 13:10, with three minutes to get off and cross over to get the 13:13 from Birmingham to Glasgow. We boarded quickly and found a first-class compartment.

My exposure to British passenger cars had thus far included two first class compartments and one restaurant car, so I took a walk the length of the train and discovered there were several types of coaches: first, second, open, corridor. Most of the older equipment is the corridor type. A corridor runs down one side of the car, and seven or eight compartments open from it. Both first and second class compartments seat six, three facing three. Both classes have luggage racks over the seats, reading lights, and folding armrests. First class compartments in addition have curtains at the windows, carpeting, and somewhat more room between the seats. The window is a large one, and the upper sash, which is perhaps ten or twelve inches high, opens for ventilation or, being careful of close clearances, sticking your head and camera out. The wall between the compartments and the corridor is mostly glass, and the corridor has lots of windows, so you can see out both sides quite well. Below the window is a little shelf, big enough for two or three teacups. The compartments are paneled in wood, and in the older stock (1960 or so), a little plate tells what kind of wood it is. There is a toilet room at each end of the car, and newer equipment has an illuminated sign visible from anywhere in the corridor that says "Vacant" or "Engaged." The toilet rooms are much larger than in U.S. coaches, but devoted to toilet and washing purposes only. About half the compartments carry no-smoking signs, which are honored, and the menus in the restaurant cars request that passengers refrain from smoking before or during the service of a meal. Corridor stock has entrance doors at both ends, a center door on the compartment side, and two doors on the aisle side.

Open stock has permanently fixed seats facing each other in pairs: two-and-two for second and two-and-one for first. Between the seats is a table. Open cars are often used next to a restaurant car for overflow seating, and in some cases an open car is paired with a full buffet-kitchen car to form a two-unit restaurant car.

Usually each train carries a guard coach which has in addition to compartments or open seating a small compartment for the guard (conductor) and a baggage compartment, separated from the aisle by a wire mesh screen.

Mainline equipment is painted a dark blue with a grey window band outlined in white. Food service cars have a red stripe over the windows, and first class cars have a yellow stripe, plus a "1" on the doors. There are still a few coaches in the previous livery, tuscan red with gold and black striping, like Pennsy's equipment. The locomotives are solid blue with yellow ends, except for a few in the old two-tone green with yellow ends. Multiple-unit equipment, both diesel and elctric, is usually solid blue with yellow ends, though some main-line MU's are in the blue-and-grey livery. Pullman trains, about which there's more later, are grey with a blue window band and yellow ends. The cars are 64 feet long, but, because they are lower and narrower than US equipment, they don't look smaller.

Most of the passenger equipment has a knuckle coupler hanging below the hook for the screw couplings (two links of chain and an inside-out turnbuckle, essentially). Older equipment has vacuum brakes and steam heating; the newer stock has air brakes and electric heat (1000 volts from the locomotive). Some cars have dual braking systems; others have both kinds of heating.

The train was a long one, and it gradually lost time through the afternoon. We rolled into Carlisle about thirty minutes late. The train sat in the station longer than normal, and we heard the loudspeaker announcing the 16:42 to Glasgow. Jim looked up as it rolled in across the platform. "That has two engines, and I'll bet they'll let it out ahead of us," he said. We grabbed our luggage, opened the door, crossed the platform, and boarded the new train. He was right; they did dispatch the train, the 12:05 from London, ahead of the train from Birmingham.

Jim explained that there are only three lines in Britain that regularly have double-headed passenger trains: London-Glasgow, Glasgow and Edinburgh-Inverness, and Glasgow-Edinburgh. The last is not strictly double-headed; the five-car trains that make the 47-mile, 43-minute run every half hour have two engines, one at each end of the train, coupled by cables that run between them. The train rolled north at good speed over the secondary line through Kilmarnock, since the main line is being electrified and currently sees only night trains. We arrived Glasgow, Central Station, precisely at 18:39.

The next morning we went to Queen Street Station, stowed our luggage in a locker, and took some pictures. Queen Street Station is actually two stations. The upper level, just below ground level, is a stub terminal for main line trains, and beneath that are four tracks for electric suburban trains. Electric suburban equipment also serves Central Station, soon to have main line electric trains from London.

Then we rode the Glasgow Underground, which makes a circle around the center of the city. The operation is an interesting one. First, it is four-foot gauge. The cars run in pairs, one motor and one trailer. They're small - ceiling height is sufficient for standing only in the center - and they have doors only on one side. Half the trains run clockwise, half counterclockwise. Power for traction comes from a third rail; power for the lights in the cars is taken from a pair of wires on the wall of the tunnel opposite the platforms. Cars are taken to and from the shops by a crane that reaches down to the tracks and lifts the car to ground level. I've been told it was originally a cable operation; my friend tried to convince me the cars were painted on only one side, a hard statement to prove or disprove.

We returned to Queen Street after a complete circuit of the line, retrieved our bags, and boarded the next train to Edinburgh. The train left the station and immediately plunged into a tunnel with a four per cent ascending grade. After a minute or two it emerged and immediately accelerated to 85 or 90 mph, a speed it maintained all the way except for a brief stop at Falkirk.

Waverly Station in Edinburgh is a busy place, with parks and overpasses thoughtfully located for the benefit of train spotters, several of whom can be seen on the platform at almost any station, almost any time, jotting down engine numbers in little notebooks. British Rail encourages railfanry. There are many books - rosters, histories, etc. - that gratefully

acknowledge in the preface the assistance of British Rail or the Great Western Railway or such. Some of the books are even published by the railways themselves.

I took part in the activity, of course. We boarded a suburban diesel multiple unit train (DMU) for the north and took the railfan seats, just behind the driver. We had an excellent view of the Firth of Forth Bridge fifteen minutes later. We got off at Inverkeithing, just across the bridge, watched several trains, and returned to Edinburgh in time to board the 15:40 to Inverness.

Up front were two diesels, and behind them were several four-wheel express cars, a couple of open second class cars, one or two composite (half second, half first) corridor coaches, and a griddle-buffet car. Shortly out of Edinburgh the waitress from the griddle car came through asking if we'd like coffee. She set the cups on the little window shelf and returned in a few minutes with the coffeepot. It seemed an intelligent way to do the process: the first trip to set out the cups and saucers and collect seven pence apiece, and the second trip to pour the coffee. Later in the afternoon we walked forward and discovered the car was an interesting piece of equipment, with a kitchen in the center between a small dining room and a lounge that held maybe a dozen people. It was the only lounge car I saw in my travels. At Stirling we picked up connecting passengers from Glasgow, and at Perth we unloaded a great deal of mail and express. After Perth the countryside became more rugged, and houses and other signs of civilization became farther and farther apart. As the afternoon passed, the train climbed into the Highlands, crossing the mountains at 1484 feet, the highest elevation on British Rail. The descent to Inverness followed river valleys and crossed several high stone arch viaducts. Arrival in Inverness was, of course, on time.

The Highlands and a Diesel Flying Scotsman

Inverness is a busy rail center, originating trains for Glasgow, Edinburgh (with through sleepers to London), Aberdeen in the northeast, Thurso and Wick at the very north of Scotland, and Kyle of Lochalsh, where a connection is made with the ferry to the Isle of Skye and the boats to the other islands. The line between Inverness and Kyle of Lochalsh is due to be abandoned in 1974, but BR is maintaining service to the end. A third train was recently added to the run to see if patronage on the line will increase. If it does, there may be hope for continuance of service.

The train to Kyle was one of several midmorning departures from Inverness. It included a full baggage car and five coaches, two filled with soldiers going to the islands. The train headed west for a while, north along the Firth of Beauly and then turned west again at Dingwall, diverging from the line to Thurso and Wick. The climb to the summit was a long one, but the train maintained a reasonable speed, between forty and fifty miles per hour, I estimated. The weather, which had been sunny in Inverness, turned overcast and raw in the mountains. It improved somewhat as the train descended toward Kyle, following the shores of a succession of lochs. The train did a good amount of local business at the stations along the western end of the route.

The terminal at Kyle of Lochalsh is on a rock pier extending into the strait. It includes a station building, several yard tracks, a crane for loading cargo onto the ships, and a small turntable for turning the short four-wheel freight cars, which are switched by manpower as often as by locomotive, at least when empty. The terminal is an ideal subject for modeling.

We spent the four-hour layover having lunch and making the ten-minute ferry ride to the Isle of Skye and back. The 17:40 train to Inverness was the same equipment, and the operation was similar. It made a pleasant one-day outing. On returning to Inverness we backed into the station, among the sleepers and the Motorail train to London, the DMU to Aberdeen, and the late train to the north.

Thursday started with photographing the mid-morning activity at Inverness: switchers, DMU's, conventional trains, and a bit of manual block operation on the line to the north. There was more activity there in an hour than LAUPT has in a day. We went to the bus terminal and boarded the noon bus to Fort William, a ride with

scenery that more than compensated for the fact that it was a bus we were riding. The route led along Loch Ness and through the Great Glen to Fort William on the west coast of Scotland. During the hour or so of wandering we did, after placing our bags in the Left Luggage office (left intentionally, that is), we discovered a cafe that served Real Coffee. After almost a week of instant coffee I understood how the British feel about tea bags.

We boarded the afternoon train to Glasgow: several coaches, a restaurant car, and two sleepers for London. The train followed the old West Highland Railway through scenery that left me wordless: high mountains, lakes, bleak moors, all under a lowering sky that threatened rain all afternoon. Around six o'clock we went to the restaurant car for high tea. The menu included bacon and eggs, fried fish, and a cold meat plate. The car was full, but not crowded, and the food was good. As we rolled southeast the weather improved. By the time the train was rolling along the bank of the Clyde under the 25,000 volt catenary for the suburban trains, the sky was clear. The sun set as we rolled down through the tunnel to Queen Street Station.

Next morning, Friday, we resumed our trip at Central Station. At 9:25 the Royal Scot left on its 402 mile, 395 minute run to London, and 25 minutes behind it was Britain's slowest name train, the Thames-Clyde Express, 9 hours and 16 minutes to London, but by a longer route. It normally uses the secondary main line via Kilmarnock to Carlisle, so we retraced part of Monday's trip. At Carlisle, though, it turns east to cross the Pennines, the backbone of England, to Leeds. The scenery, fields and meadows at first, became high, rounded, treeless mountains, and the line stayed well up on the side-hills, crossing several stone viaducts and going through a number of tunnels. Lunch was as good as Monday's had been. We felt well-padded as we rolled down into Eastern Region territory. At Leeds, the engine was uncoupled and another coupled to the rear of the train. The total maneuver took ten minutes at most, and the train continued south to London. We boarded a DMU for a quick trip to York.

At York we visited the BR museum, which contains locomotives and cars from the earliest days of railroading up to the turn of the century. We returned to the station for some train watching of a frequency exceeded in the U.S. only at Jamaica on the Long Island and Newark on the Penn Central.

Saturday's return to London began with an eighty-mile trip north to Newcastle on a semi-local train. The train did a great deal of local business at such places as Darlington and Durham. At Newcastle we had half an hour to wait for the 11:55 to London, the Flying Scotsman. Activity in the station was up to standard, and I spent a few minutes talking with a local railfan. He seemed amazed that we exist with one train three times a week in parts of the U.S. While we talked three or four DMU's came and went and a train to Bristol and Plymouth arrived, picked up several more coaches, and departed.

The Flying Scotsman was a couple of minutes late. We boarded one of the newest type of first class compartment cars: air conditioning, sealed grey-tinted windows, but still with wood paneling inside. The train was drawn by a Deltic diesel. These are 3300 HP machines built in 1961. They ride on two six-wheel trucks, all axles driven, and the prime mover is a pair of opposed-piston engines gone to extremes: three banks of cylinders that form an equilateral triangle, with three crankshafts, one at each vertex of the triangle. Another way to look at it is to think of it as three sixty-degree V-6's, fastened head to head to head, to form opposed-piston cylinders. Anyway, they move. The ride to London included many miles of ninety- and hundred-mile-an-hour running. Lunch was, of course, up to BR standard.

John Steinbeck states in Travels With Charley that some journeys "are over and dead before the traveler returns." The Scotland trip ended at King's Cross Station; I have no real memory of the tube ride to Paddington Station and the 16:45 to Didcot.

The Land Beyond Pronunciation

I started my second week in Britain with a bus ride, a suburban route up to Oxford. It was a slow ten-mile trip. Loading and fare-paying takes far more time than in the

U.S.: the passenger boards, and tells the driver where he is going. The driver looks up the fare in a book and sets the dials of a ticket machine for the amount. The passenger gives the driver his money (or the passenger fishes through her purse for a combination of 1-penny, 2-pence, and possibly 5-pence pieces that's close to the amount, then asks what the fare is again, sets her parcels down, and gives the driver the fare). The driver turns a crank on the ticket machine and a small paper ticket emerges, which can then be thrown away.

From Oxford I took a train to Reading and changed there to a Southern Region train to Waterloo Station. Southern Region BR is almost entirely third-rail electric MU trains, running quite a bit more often than the San Francisco Municipal Railway's 3-Jackson line. Off-peak headway on branch lines is sometimes as long as half an hour. Waterloo and Charing Cross stations both struck me as a bit dull, comparing their trains, third-rail MUs, with the variety of equipment I had seen at Paddington, Euston, and King's Cross. I returned to Oxford the usual way, fast train from Paddington.

Tuesday Jim and I again went to Oxford by bus to take the 11:17 to Birmingham. The bus was twenty minutes late, and we arrived at the station just as the train arrived from Southampton. Jim had explained that the day's trip would require changing at Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury, and Machynlleth. As it happened, though, the train to Birmingham had recently been extended to Liverpool, and the DMU to Wales from Shrewsbury originated at Wolverhampton, as part of a train to Chester.

We found a first-class compartment and decided to see what the buffet car offered for lunch: mostly pre-packaged sandwiches, coffee, and such. It was adequate.

As we rolled into Birmingham, after a fast ride across the rolling, green countryside, we passed a large billboard advertising trains to London, 113 miles, in 95 minutes, every half-hour, the "half" recently added to the sign in bold red lettering. Our train swapped the diesel for electric power, which made short work of the 19 miles to Wolverhampton. At Wolverhampton, another beehive of activity, we waited two minutes for the DMU to Wales. We found first-class seats right at the rear, for an observation-car view of the double-track suburban line to Shrewsbury. The scenery to Shrewsbury was undistinguished, and the car was a bit warm, so we both dozed a bit. At Shrewsbury the 3 cars to Aberystwyth were uncoupled from the 4 continuing to Chester, and a driver boarded our end, manual block token in hand. We set off to the west on a single-track line into wet Pennsylvania-type scenery. The driver picked up new block tokens from signal boxes every ten miles or so, and the station names became more and more unpronounceable. The rain got heavier, too.

We arrive Machynlleth, in deepest Wales, about four o'clock. A DMU from Pwllheli was pulling into the little yard from the station as we arrived, and soon an up train, another DMU set, arrived from Aberystwyth and picked up the connecting passengers from the Pwllheli line. The two trains left, one for Aberystwyth and one for Shrewsbury. The DMU returned from the yard to receive the passengers for Pwllheli, Barmouth, Portmadoc, and the other towns along Cardigan Bay.

All through Britain I noticed that schedules were planned for convenient connections. Several trains would arrive at a transfer point within a few minutes, there would be a scramble of passengers across platforms and up and down stairs, much slamming of doors, and all the trains would leave. The total span of time from the first arrival to the last departure was rarely more than fifteen minutes, and the entire process would be repeated every hour or two, all day long.

The train followed the train to Aberystwyth for a few miles and turned north along the coast, still in single-track, manual block territory. The route followed the water's edge much of the way, and even with the clouds and rain the view of the mountains coming right down to the water was a grand one from the railfan seats right behind the driver. The train did quite a bit of local business, including lots of school children. The crew pointed out the various sights along the way, and even said things like, "You can get a good picture of Harlech Castle from the bridge there. We'll wait for you." They told us that the line is due for abandonment in a year or two, and they were quite concerned with the fate of the people who depend on it for transportation.

Since none of the trains beyond Shrewsbury had carried any food service car, my stomach was firmly convinced it was dinner time when we arrived at Portmadoc. We checked in at the hotel and found it would be nearly an hour before dinner. Meal times, in general, are later in Britain than in the U.S. After a good dinner we braved the drizzle and walked half a mile to the other end of town and the Festiniog station. There was no equipment on hand, but the tracks were there, rails 2 feet apart. In the morning we'd ride the train.

The weather Wednesday morning was a little better. The rain had stopped, but the clouds were still hanging low in the sky. We bought our first-class tickets to Dduallt, which is pronounced THEE-alhhht, more or less. If, as I've been told, Castilian Spanish arose because people didn't want their lisping king to feel different, I'm sure Welsh is the result of a monarch with a cleft palate.

The train was waiting in front of the station: a 2-6-2 tank engine, originally built by Alco for service in the trenches in France in World War I, a third class compartment coach, each compartment with its own door to the platform and no corridor, an open third, a buffet car, believe it or not, an open first (high-backed wing chairs, one on each side of a narrow aisle), and a first-class observation car, for 25 pence extra. The engine was painted green, with lots of red trim, and the cars were a deep red, with gold striping and lettering. The waiter from the buffet car came through, selling guidebooks to the line (yes, I sprang for one) and later coffee (ditto). The train rocked its way across the causeway to Boston Lodge, where the yard and shops are, and then climbed into the hills. At Merionfford there's a direct connection to BR, for those that don't want to walk or take a taxi the length of Portmadoc. In the summer the Festiniog station even sells BR tickets, since BR's station there is just an open platform, with only the Festiniog overpass providing shelter from the rain.

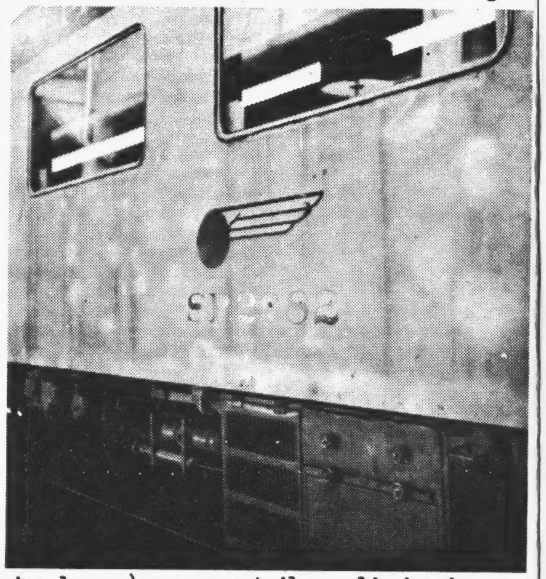
The round trip ride, nine and a half miles each way, took about an hour and a half, with a few minutes at Dduallt, present end of the line, to get out and take pictures and get rained on. Construction is under way to extend, or rather restore, the line to Blaenau Festiniog. If the scenery on the new section is even one-third as spectacular as the current section, it will be quite a line. The present line ascends from Boston Lodge on a steady grade mostly through woods. The line passes through several cuts with very close clearances and over a long high rock fill that spans a small valley. The view, near the top, of a new atomic power plant from the ancient train is a study in anachronism. (Actually the cars are not that old: most were built within the past decade, but to old designs.)

We returned to Portmadoc in time for lunch and an easy, but damp, walk to the BR station for the train back to Oxford. This time the trip did require changing at Machynlleth, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, and Birmingham. Most of the connections were immediate ones; at Birmingham we had time for supper in the station restaurant. We arrived Oxford with just enough time to catch the bus to Dorchester, and though the bus ride seemed slow, we were in Dorchester by nightfall.

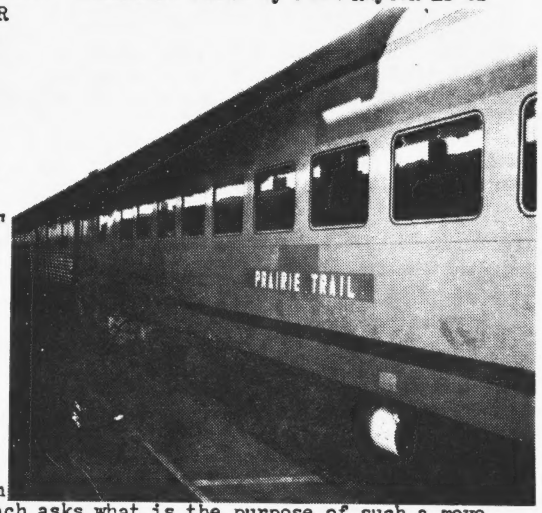
Mixed Train of Thoughts

GEORGE DRURY'S article on British Rail, above, will be concluded in either the next (July 3) issue or the one following that. George also has some nice photos from Britain which we hope to include with the final installment..... DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS: The Autoliner 100 observation car used for Amtrak's VIPs at the May 1 Anniversary ceremonies in Washington did not travel on the first refurbished BROADWAY LTD (tho it came into D.C. on the last combined BDWY/NATIONAL), but left May 3 on a non-refurbished BROADWAY to return to home base Omaha. It was built from an ex-NYC 4 bedroom-2compartment-2 drawing room car, not a 10/6 as we said before..... METROLINER RIDERSHIP continues to go up and up. In May it exceeded 200,000, the first time in any

one month. The previous high was 180,000 the month before..... AMTRAK TIMETABLE does not show last-minute Northeast changes: two conventional trains were extended between Washington and Philadelphia; the 8am train leaving NY arrives in Washington 12 noon, and the northbd BAY STATE originates in D.C. at 7:05am. The 8am train is named the FREE STATE..... THE POCKMARKED lounge in the accompanying photo by Message Media is SP 2982, leased to Amtrak, seen here on the 1st eastbd SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR. It was the same lounge used on the George McGovern campaign train described in the last issue..... SP DINER on the 1st SF ZEPHYR looked about equally decrepit, but riders reported it rode extremely well..... JUST FOR the record, the Amtrak funding bill reported elsewhere in this issue was finally passed by the Senate June 8 and the House June 13.... PASSENGERS WHO expect a dome on the SF ZEPHYR west of Denver are advised to inquire about the dates it runs, as there aren't enough at present to use daily.. AMTRAK'S JUNE 11 timetable was reportedly delayed this time because Ditler Bros. of Atlanta, the printers, had a press breakdown. 500,000 were printed.....



APRIL 30 timetables (all three regional ones) are reportedly mouldering in the infamous baggage room of Washington's Union Station--scores of boxes of them--while most stations around the nation never had enough for distribution to passengers. Who's running things there, anyway?..... NIGHT OWL may be the train name, but it apparently doesn't apply to the crew. A passenger June 8 attempting to board at Washington around 9:30pm found all the lights off in the coaches and none of the sleeping car porters in sight. Other passengers were wandering around wondering if they had the right train. A bit later one of the porters awakened in his roomette and started to help people aboard. Who's supervising things there, anyway?..... STEVE FARRAR sends us a late report that two DOT Silverliner test cars were deadheaded from Washington to Sanford, Fla. in mid-month, and returned in the SILVER STAR, apparently to test for high-speed passenger operation between Orlando and Tampa, Fla..... PATRONAGE ON trains 98 and 99, Steve also says, is up from previous 1-10 riders to 20-35 per train, helped by a 25% cut in fare. Amtrak has been advertising it in Newport News via newspaper, radio and TV. Radio: "the train to Grandma's house is leaving on track 3." Speaking of featherbedding, this one-car train carries a crew of 7: engineer, fireman, baggageman, conductor, brakeman, porter, and C&O news butch..... STEVE FARRAR is still in an Army rail detachment, tho his battalion was shut down June 22 with impressive ceremony involving one steam and three diesel trains ..... DISASTROUS FLOODING occurred late in June along the Atlantic Coast and in the Northeast from hurricane Agnes (the first of the season) which dumped unprecedented amounts of rain. Over 100 deaths have been counted to date. Transportation was snarled in many places. We don't have the complete story at this point, and may never have it, but we can report some late news from Steve Farrar. Richmond, VA, was one of the hardest-hit spots. June 22-23, Southern Railway passenger trains were rerouted Washington - RF&P-Richmond-SCL-Raleigh-SR branch-Greensboro. C&O passenger service was still suspended as of June 24; Main St. Station was inacessible by auto, due to 36-foot floodwaters. Many C&O tracks were washed out. NY-Florida trains were running 3-5 hours late. Slow orders were in effect on Penn Central Wilmington to DC and on the RF&P. June 23 the 3 northbd (morning) trains at Richmond were held there until afternoon because of washouts. June 24 two Interstate highways, I-95 and I-301, were closed in several places between Richmond and Washington. Forty-one Virginia highway bridges were washed out. SCL had only one rail bridge open near Richmond..... ABOUT THE same time, flash floods from sudden heavy rains were also happening in the Southwest, notably Arizona. No reports yet on what happened to transportation. And here in California, the San Joaquin River overflowed levees at Isleton, not too far from the Rio Vista Museum of the Bay Area Electric Railway Association. Don't know the cause of that flood (Isleton inundated but no casualties reported)--not due to rain..... ADJOINING PHOTO by Paul Rayton is of a coach on the rear of the SUPER CHIEF leaving L.A. June 13. The car is one of a group of ex-UP coaches purchased by Kratville (Autoliner) Shops of Omaha and now under lease to Amtrak. The owners painted out the UP name and numbers and gave them names (not the usual practice with coaches) starting with "Prairie." The coach seen, still in yellow paint, is "Prairie Trail". They are used for the thru service L.A.-N.Y. via Kansas City..... GOV. REAGAN of Calif. has just signed the next fiscal year's budget, and cut out a lot of money. But one item left in is 100,000 bucks to study moving the Santa Fe line away from the beach at San Clemente and into the hills somewhere (Budget Item 318.4).



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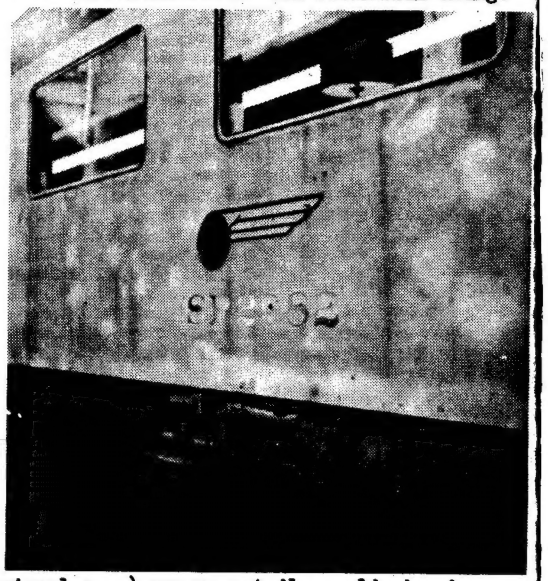

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